

Legislative Issue Brief – Work First Electing County Status



Catawba County Board of Commissioner's Legislative Goal

Support the restoration of the financial incentives by the State for counties opting to be "Electing Counties"

Background

When the concept of Work First Electing Counties was created by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1997, the General Assembly gave Electing Counties a monetary allocation for their assistance. To provide an incentive for counties to take part in the social experiment, the State allowed Electing Counties to shift their unspent "cash assistance" dollars to other service areas.

Electing Counties have created and continue to create many innovative programs and policies that the State has ultimately adopted. However, the State is pairing down the economic incentive for counties, resulting in an increased financial risk for Electing County status. For example, during Fiscal Year 2007-08, the State decreased the Electing County economic incentive for Catawba County by \$506,185, as the TANF Cash assistance allocation was reduced from \$1,599,925 to \$1,093,740.

If Electing County funds continue to be reduced, counties will have fewer resources to create programs for individuals in need or support current programs that are not receiving adequate funding from the State. For example, Catawba County designates unspent Electing County funding for Child Protective Services (CPS) intake and investigation needs. Currently, the County does not receive enough direct funds for CPS positions to oversee the large caseload requirement mandated by state law. If Catawba County's Electing County funds continue to be decreased it will be difficult to maintain the current child welfare caseload requirements. Significant financial losses for electing counties were initially in the State budget during the 2009 Long Session. However, lobbying efforts by Catawba County and the County's contract lobbyist prevented those cuts from going forward.

Catawba County Legislative Contact

Lee Worsley, Assistant County Manager

Direct: 828-465-8262

Cell: 828-228-7192

lworsley@catawbacountync.gov

Current as of April 8, 2010